**Developmental and Age-Appropriate Participation in Decision Making**

The tables below are based on the approach published in the National Children’s Bureau (2009)

Embedding Listening within the Early Years.

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|  **0 – 18 months**  |
| **Developmental Stage**  | **Involvement in decision making**  | **Methods of participation**  |
| Enjoys the company of others and shows/ seeks contact with others. By 6 months babies usually make sounds like babbling and cooing, at 1 year babies usually will start to make talking noises like ma-ma-ma and da-da-da. By 18 months babies usually can say around 20 familiar words such as bye-bye, no and more. Experience things in the present through their senses Use facial expressions, body language, pre-verbalisation and gestures to express their views  | Food Clothing Who they want to be with How they are handled What they play with  | Given options to choose from Use visual aids and say the words Accept or refuse things that are offered Show interest and preference through nodding or shaking their head, reaching and looking towards things/people they want Show feelings through body language such as tensing their body, tears, laughter, turning away.  |

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| **1 ½ - 3 ½ years**  |
| **Developmental Stage**  | **Involvement in decision making**  | **Methods of participation**  |
| By 2 children usually communicate using more than 50 single words such as ball, cup and juice. They will start to put sentences together using 2/3 words such as ‘ball gone’ and ‘more juice.’ By the age of 3 children will usually use up to 300 words. They will use a variety of words to describe to show their understanding or put 4/5 words together to make short sentences such as ‘Me want to go park.’ Still use senses, facial expressions but able to consider options beyond the immediate present such as letting you know they want to go outside by walking to the door saying coat. Able to wait for wishes for short periods of time Beginning to use language to do some sharing and take turns Will actively participate in small groups such as singing, movement Some may not see danger and others may see danger  | Food they eat and how much What they wear What activities they engage in Who they play with Which activities they attend by showing they do or do not want to go such as refusing to put their coat on to go  | Choosing from options, pointing to pictures, some basic verbal communication, mime, movement, painting, music, story telling  |

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| **3 ½ - 5 years**  |
| **Developmental Stage**  | **Involvement in decision making**  | **Methods of participation**  |
| Can empathise and consider others Some understanding of cause and effect Use language to express themselves Use their imagination to help them understand such as what if…? Can share, take turns, follow rules Interact more in groups Talk about the past and future By the age of 4 children will ask lots of questions such as ‘why, where and what.’ They will use longer sentences and link them together such as. ‘Mummy and me goed to the shops and had some sweetsBy the age of 5 children will use sentences that are well formed such as ‘I went on holiday with Mummy and Daddy.’  | Food, clothes, activities, people, groups, environment Choosing new equipment, menus, routines Problem solving and conflict resolution Caring for themselves and others Rules and Boundaries  | Choosing from options Suggesting new options Expressing preferences Compiling scrapbooks/books about themselves Making representational drawings and models Discussing issues raised from a story Making up and acting out stories personally or using puppets Taking part in group activities such as circle time  |

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| **6 to 10 years** |
| **Developmental Stage**  | **Involvement in decision making**  | **Methods of participation**  |
| Can critically evaluate, query judgements, consider more than one thing at a time and change opinion Can plan, carry out tasks, problem solve individually or in a group, take account of others ideas Understand and work with numbers, size, space, time, symbols and words Have awareness of fairness, injustice, issues with a desire to take action  | All of the above What to learn and do in their spare time Who they live with and where Setting and working to rules Wider community e.g. play areas Consider cost, space, plans, quality and quantity Health and medical needs/treatment  | All of the above Group discussions/meetings, presentations, workshops, mind maps, pros and cons and prioritising Drama, music and movement Writing stories, letters, plans Making maps, posters, books, models Using cameras and recording equipment Latest technology and digital media  |

Sourced from [Listening to children's perspectives: improving the quality of provision in early years settings - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/listening-to-childrens-perspectives-improving-the-quality-of-provision-in-early-years-settings)